

African government officials focus on cement and concrete sector

African government officials are turning their attention towards the cement and concrete industry as strong GDP growth and a growing middle class punctuate the sub-Saharan region. Urbanisation is now a strong trend across the continent with the building, construction and real estate sectors expanding at double-digit rates in recent quarters. It is estimated that cement is responsible for 65% to 75% of the construction sector in Africa and demand for the commodity continues to increase in direct variance with rising consumption and an increasing demand for infrastructure.

In Nigeria, cement production has increased by an average of 10.9% a year since 2004. In Tanzania, where growing investment into infrastructure is driving demand for cement, one of the region's largest cement plants is now only a few months away from being operational and is expected to produce 5,000 tonnes of clinker a day in response to the supply and demand gap in the region's construction sector.

There are, however, still a number of challenges facing Africa's cement and concrete industry. These include high cost factors such as energy costs and increasing international competition in the local marketplace. But opportunities in the sector continue to outweigh challenges and African government officials active in development initiatives, public works, and housing are heading to Johannesburg next month to increase their collaboration with the cement and concrete industry at the **Totally Concrete Expo** towards improved infrastructure and better service delivery.

HE Vincent Karega, High Commissioner of the **Embassy of Rwanda**, Jonathan Lodompui, Director of Enablers and Macro Reforms at **Kenya's Vision 2030**, Daniel Manduku, CEO of **Kenya's National Construction Authority** and HE Josefina Pitra Diakite, Ambassador at the **Embassy of Angola**, will be some of the African VIPs in attendance as guest speakers at the event to fast-track access to the construction sectors in their respective countries. **South Africa's Department of Public Works** is the Host Ministry for the event, who will be there to boost opportunities for cross-border and private sector collaboration in infrastructure initiatives. As positive economics and demographics drive confidence in Africa's construction sector both industry and government are recognising the important role of cement and concrete in the development of the continent.

The Totally Concrete Expo, co-located with the African Construction Expo to create Africa's largest cement and concrete event for the construction industry, is supported by more than 60 media and association partners including some of South Africa's leading industry associations such as **Master Builders South Africa**, South Africa's **National Home Builders Registration Council** and the **South African Institute of Civil Engineers (SAICE)**. Itumeleng Dlamini, Executive Director of **Master Builders South Africa**, says of the event, "In line with the primary role of Master Builders South Africa, the Totally Concrete Expo will promote the highest quality and standards through excellence for the construction industry and engage government and legislative bodies on policies that affect the industry."

Sponsored by the **South African Department of Public Works, PPC, Lafarge, BASF, AfriSam, Construction Computer Software (CCS), Nyeleti Consulting, Pan Mixers South Africa, Reimer, Vecoplan and WBHO**, the Totally Concrete Expo will welcome more than 40 African VIPs, over 120 internationally renowned speakers, 200 exhibitors and 5000 participants to help shape the future of cement and concrete in Africa.